

LISTENING

The goal: To *feel* (profoundly) heard

1. “Profoundly” = the listener has helped them “drill down” to their deep self – their deep thoughts, feelings, emotions, opinions, and experiences – including their fears and even their traumas, and especially their longings, desires, and hopes.
2. The listener offers the gift of profoundly hearing, and the listener helps them by letting them hear their own voice and find their self to their deep self.
 - a. Perhaps they will feel profoundly heard for the first time.
 - b. Perhaps they will feel they have profoundly heard their self for the first time.
 - c. The storyteller always remains in control of how much they feel comfortable disclosing.
3. Everyone has rights. When we listen to people it is always “Yes.” When people make a declaration of any kind it is always “Yes.” Yes, they have the right to ... their declaration, their point of view, their emotions, etc. Listening has in it the ability to affirm that the other person is “OK.” And we know that profound listening leads to the fact that often a person’s starting point is not where they end up. When they feel heard and can hear themselves they often end up at a different (often better) place.
4. The foundational skill of listening:
 - a. Senge: Set your thoughts and opinions aside. You can pick them up anytime you choose.
 - b. Senk: The absence of thought.
 - c. Keating: Come to nothing.
 - d. Bohm: Suspend your thoughts, feelings, and opinions
5. The skill of listening includes all the things we have discussed: the formula: uncommon initiative + remarkable curiosity x profound courage = listening (love), AMPP, the power of the pause, etc.

DIALOGUE

The goal: To discover unity, oneness, one heart/soul/mind, participatory or collective thought. Collectively find “*coherent* meaning.”

“Coherent:” The difference between wholeness and fragmentation

A subsidiary goal of dialogue is total coordinated action toward a goal. Foundationally, the only goal is profound oneness. There can be other stated goals.

Paul: “I urge you, therefore, to walk worthily of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility, modesty, gentleness, and meekness, bearing with one another in love; endeavoring, being zealous, in eagerness making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

“Be of the same mind, having the same love, harmonious, of one soul and one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not just to your own interests but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4)

Jesus: “In that day you yourselves will know that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you” (Jn. 14:20).

Bohm: “The object of a dialogue is not to analyze things, or to win an argument, or to exchange opinions. Rather, it is to suspend your opinions and to look at the opinions – to listen to everybody’s opinions, to suspend them, and to see what it all means. If we can see what all of our opinions mean, then we are *sharing a common content* ... And if we can see them all, we may then move more creatively in a different direction. ... a different kind of consciousness is possible among us, a *participatory consciousness*” (*On Dialogue*, p. 30).

Collective or participatory thought can be mystical, psychological, and physical (you can sense/feel it in your body)

All the listening skills we have learned are critical in the process of dialogue, especially the absence of thought or the setting aside of one’s thoughts, opinions, feelings, emotions, and experiences. An additional skill in dialogue is to repeat the last sentence or last few words a person has said – or something they said that seemed important *to them* – and ask them if they could “build upon or add to that.”

DISCUSSION (COOPERATIVE DISCUSSION)

The goal: To solve a problem, come to a conclusion, or make a decision (toward an agreed upon goal)

1. When listening and dialogue are foundational, discussion can be fantastically successful. To repeat the above, the goal of “Discussion” is to solve a problem, come to a conclusion or make a decision that moves the group/team forward. Movement toward the goal continually gains energy, momentum, inspiration. It can *feel* deeply rewarding to be part of a community or team working together toward something we value.
2. Discussion is closed-ended to solve a stated/agreed upon problem (towards an agreed upon goal)
3. People are encouraged to:
 - a. Have a point of view which comes from facts, experience, or informed opinion.
 - b. Take a stand
 - c. Be an advocate
4. Two cautions:
 - a. People can become fixed around their point of view, which can polarize. The team needs to have a value to help one another so this does not happen.
 - b. People can personalize (take things personally) the approach of another person. Yes, how someone says something can be indelicate. All members of the team or group must remain committed not to hold onto offense and to help one another “let it go.” Taking offense is natural and unavoidable. Remaining offended must be worked through by each person and not allowed by the team.
5. There can be winners and losers, but this isn’t necessary when the agreed upon problem solving toward a goal is kept in mind. That is, when the decision is made and direction toward the goal is determined, all are winners. All along the way, the positive, hopeful, meaningful feeling state is energized, and when the goal is reached, all celebrate the “win.” It does not have to be a “zero sum game.”

6. When engaged in a Discussion, it must be decided up front who will make the decision and how (the process by which) the decision is going to be made.
7. The skills of listening are critical to furthering the discussion to accomplish the goal.
8. Discussion can be either relationship building or relationship separating depending upon the skillful use of listening and the condition of self of each member involved.

DEBATE

1. There is a specific subject to be debated and the subject is known.
2. People take sides.
3. Debate is meant to be impersonal where there is a winner and a loser.
4. People prepare their facts or opinions in advance.
5. Unfortunately, there is a growing unconscious tendency to debate without preparation. It happens as a reaction to (not thoughtful) what one thinks they know or what they believe.
6. There is an absence of (profound) listening. In fact, listening for the purpose of furthering relationship is not valued and is considered a weakness.
7. Debate when engaged in and not planned is by definition “relationship separating.” In other words, all interaction between people results in a furthering of a positive relationship or the furthering of negative relationship. The “by definition” comment means that unless something is perceived as furthering a positive relationship, it then becomes “relationship separating/dividing.” There is no neutral.

A reflection on the psychological depths and mysticism of dialogue:

PARTICIPATORY OR COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

From Presence:

We can become witnesses or observers of our own thoughts (including feelings and emotions)
(Martin Laird's mountain and weather)

We can become witnesses of the thoughts of others (within our selves and outside ourselves) and can learn to "hold" them.

We can begin to learn to observe *the process* of our thoughts, that is, *how* we think and feel not just what we think and feel.

This observing the process of our thoughts can mature into seeing the many layers of assumptions, beliefs, etc. that are the "thoughtless" starting places of our thinking.

The more we become present to this deep depth of Presence, often referred to as our true self and deeper yet the Divine Indwelling ending in God Who/Which has no end, we are holding the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and experiences of others. Here we are fully discovering our common humanity, our unity as the body of Christ, and becoming collective, participating in the consciousness of the One Who is the All in all.

On the one hand, there is nothing to do. We just are. Just being. Pure being. Deciding nothing. Doing nothing. Accomplishing nothing.

On the other hand, from here there is only Love. Only the Divine matters, and because the Divine matters, everyone and everything matters (Keating). Everyone and everything is forgiven (Tutu). We just are.

Love acts. From this place of pure being, the inspirations of the Spirit spontaneously direct our actions.

"Our ultimate goal is to integrate the active and contemplative dimensions within us and all around us" (Keating).